

**TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS**

**AND**

**BILLS BEFORE THE 82<sup>ND</sup> TEXAS LEGISLATURE**

**COMPANION TO “A TEACHER COMPENSATION STRATEGY FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN THE TEXAS CLASSROOM” (JANUARY 2011)**

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**TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND BILLS BEFORE  
THE 82<sup>ND</sup> TEXAS LEGISLATURE: EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

This policy brief reviews key bills now before the Texas Legislature which promise to improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement in Texas public schools. It identifies ways these bills must be strengthened to ensure implementation represents legislative intent and reflects empirical knowledge about stimulating academic gains and closing pernicious achievement gaps between student groups. This brief also surveys today's landscape on teacher effectiveness, and outlines how the bills could fit into a comprehensive, long-range state plan for achieving state goals for public education. It is a companion to TIER's recently published report entitled, *A Teacher Compensation Strategy for Excellence in the Texas Classroom* which can be found at <http://texaseducationreform.org>.

The need to strengthen teacher effectiveness is one of the most critical challenges confronting Texas. The connection between improving teaching and student learning is undisputed. The academic gaps in Texas public education are evident – between student groups within Texas public schools and between Texas youth and their peers in other states and nations. Despite decades of intense state reforms – significant increases in school funding and much reorganization of classroom instruction – the majority of students in Texas public schools still cannot read proficiently, fail to acquire the academic skills necessary to succeed in college and career, and remain educationally handicapped by family income, race, and ethnicity – handicaps which can be surmounted by effective teachers, according to a substantial body of empirical research.

Seven bills now deliberated by the 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature could increase the effectiveness of teachers in Texas public schools today: HB 400, HB 1587, SB 3, SB 4, SB 443, SB 468, and SB 570. These bills propose to extend authority of school districts and strengthen state support for local efforts to (a) tailor teacher compensation and professional opportunities to meet community needs, (b) implement workforce reductions that prioritize classroom learning, (c) streamline dismissal of teachers with cause, (d) expand student access to effective teachers, (d) strengthen the preparation of prospective teachers, particularly in the science of reading, (e) create certification, induction, mentoring, appraisal, and professional development programs that use student achievement to identify and improve teacher effectiveness, and (f) improve recruitment and retention of effective teachers while increasing the attractiveness of teaching to high ability individuals.

However, these bills are unlikely to significantly improve teaching and learning in Texas public schools unless strengthened by a few simple provisions that address fundamental deficiencies in current state policy. Before enacting policy to identify, measure, and improve teacher effectiveness, the Texas Legislature should:

- I. ***Define Teacher Effectiveness.*** This definition should be based on (a) existing state goals for student learning and achievement – postsecondary readiness and closure of achievement gaps, (b) empirical findings of the majority of researchers, and (c) measurable, standardized criteria. A definition of teacher effectiveness should not be based on ideology, particularly on the all too

prevalent and mistaken beliefs among educational professionals – that student demographics determine educational destiny and student achievement should not serve as the primary goal of classroom instruction. These unfortunate beliefs make it essential for Texas Legislature to define teacher effectiveness, instead of relegating this task to the state education agency which crafts regulation based largely on the advice and support of educational professionals;

- II. ***Provide Reliable, Standardized Measures of Individual Student Growth that Are Connected to Individual Teachers.*** A state measure of value added growth, connected by the state education data system to individual students and teachers, is required to help identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and to level the playing field for teachers and schools;
- III. ***Make Student Academic Achievement Central to All State Policies Pertaining to Teachers.*** Based on the state’s education goals and the economical realities faced by Texans today, state teacher policies should prioritize postsecondary readiness and closing achievement gaps between student groups – making it the primary basis for teacher preparation, certification, induction, appraisals, compensation, professional development, professional pathways, and continued employment;
- IV. ***Implement Reading Reforms.*** Until the Texas Legislature enacts reforms to stimulate dramatic improvements in reading proficiency – enabling the majority of students to comprehend instructional materials – no improvements in teaching and learning are possible for Texas public schools; and

- V. ***Create a Comprehensive, Long-Range State Plan for Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness.*** State efforts to improve teaching will not be successful as isolated, stand-alone reforms, but instead must represent a coherent, mutually-reinforcing network of policies. A framework for long-range reform of state teacher policies is required to improve teaching and learning in Texas public schools.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This policy brief reviews key bills now before the Texas Legislature which promise to improve educator effectiveness, provides ways to strengthen the bills, suggests reasons for supporting enactment, surveys the landscape on teacher effectiveness, and outlines how the bills could fit into a comprehensive, long-range state plan for increasing student achievement and shrinking achievement gaps between student groups in Texas public schools.

The need to increase educator effectiveness is one of the most critical challenges facing Texas today. It is no exaggeration to say that the state's future depends on increasing the number, as well as the distribution, of highly effective teachers in Texas public schools.

**"In charting a course for continued growth and prosperity, we can think of no other sector of the public workforce more critical to the future success of the state of Texas than its classroom teachers."** Sid

Richardson Foundation

*Delivering a High-Quality Teacher Workforce for Texas: Reconsidering University-Based Teacher Preparation in Texas, Renewing Commitments, and Improving Practice in the Twenty-First Century, 2009*

In 2009, the Texas Legislature adopted aggressive goals for public education that our schools, educators and students must meet. House Bill 3 set postsecondary readiness as the new standard for high school graduates, and calls for public schools to make Texas one of the nation's top 10 states in graduating college-ready students by the school year of 2019-2020.<sup>1</sup>

We must meet this goal. The premium on college degrees grows rapidly, almost doubling

over the past 30 years.<sup>2</sup> For our children, this currently means a difference of at least 65 percent in earnings for those with college degrees and those without.<sup>3</sup> For our state, meeting this goal could mean an increase of more than one million new jobs by 2030, and an increase in gross state product and personal income by 15 and 12 percent respectively.<sup>4</sup>

**"According to the Business Roundtable, by 2018 63 percent of new or replacement jobs in the U.S. will require at least some college education and 45 percent will require a bachelor's degree or higher."**

Sandy Kress

"Block efforts to rollback accountability reforms," *San Antonio Express News*, 4/1/2011

If, however unthinkable, we are unable to substantially increase high school graduation with postsecondary readiness and college degree completion, the future is dim. If current demographic trends and educational outcomes hold, the average household income of Texans is projected to decrease from the 2010 average of \$52,639 to \$47,883 by 2040, with the percentage of households in poverty increasing from 14.4 to 16.6 percent (up to 18.9 percent for nonfamily households).<sup>5</sup>

The magnitude of academic improvement required to achieve the state's education goal in less than 10 years is enormous. Less than a quarter of Texas public school graduates who took the ACT in 2010 met the standard for postsecondary readiness.<sup>6</sup> However, this standard was met by only nine percent of African-American and 13 percent of Hispanic students, in contrast to 42 percent of Anglo students in Texas public schools.<sup>7</sup>

For Texans to graduate students ready for college and career and to close achievement gaps between student groups, state

policymakers are challenged to substantially, immediately improve teacher effectiveness.

**“The key to student success is providing an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective principal in every school.” U.S.**

Department of Education

*Great Teachers and Great Leaders: A Blueprint for Reform, Elementary & Secondary Education ESEA Reauthorization, 2010*

This challenge takes particular urgency today as cuts in public education funding, likely to continue for some years,<sup>8</sup> prompt many school districts to introduce workforce reductions. State policy reforms are critically needed to help districts identify, improve, and reward the effectiveness of teachers in Texas public schools today – and to increase the effectiveness of teacher preparation and pool of prospective high ability teachers.

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature can begin to build a state policy infrastructure to enhance teacher effectiveness by enacting and strengthening the bills reviewed in this report: HB 400, HB 1587, SB 3, SB 4, SB 443, SB 468, and SB 570.

## II. BILL SUMMARIES (As Pertains to Educator Effectiveness)<sup>1</sup> & RECOMMENDATIONS

### House Bill 400 Summary (Filed by House Education Committee Chair, Rep. Rob Eissler):

This bill (a) expands statutory authority for school districts to determine teacher compensation and repeals the state minimum salary schedule, (b) establishes state criteria and an optional model for local compensation plans which include differential pay and

bonuses for effectiveness in improving student achievement, (c) repeals requirement for workforce reductions to be based on reverse order of seniority and permits districts to develop local criteria for workforce reductions, (d) lengthens time for districts to notify teachers about contract renewal or non-renewal, (e) loosens class size requirements for kindergarten through grade four and accelerated instruction, and (f) requires the Texas Education Agency to collect and publish information about teacher shortages.

### Recommendations for House Bill 400:

- Include a definition of teacher effectiveness which prioritizes increasing student achievement, closing achievement gaps between student groups, and preparing all students for postsecondary success;
- Expand the provision requiring the TEA to collect and publish information about critical teacher shortage areas by adding a requirement to collect and publish information pertaining to campus and district distribution of qualified teachers;
- Expand the provision requiring the TEA to develop a model compensation plan by specifying an independently validated and reliable value added measure must be used as one means of demonstrating teacher effectiveness in improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps;
- Add a provision that requires districts to link compensation decisions to annual appraisals;
- Expand provisions loosening class size restrictions for kindergarten through grade 4 and remedial classes by allowing districts to fully eliminate class size restrictions *if* classes are taught by highly effective teachers who demonstrate sustained ability to improve student achievement and close

<sup>1</sup> Summaries do not include any provisions that are not directly connected to teacher effectiveness.

achievement gaps for early grades/remedial instruction;

- Expand the Education Code Chapter 21 definition of “good cause” for terminations and suspensions to include lack of teacher effectiveness in improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps;
- Replace the Education Code Chapter 21 requirement for a hearing examiner and involvement of the Commissioner of Education in teacher termination or suspension appeals with statute that allows districts to use the hearing examiner process (TEC 21.251-21.255) or an alternative resolution process approved by the commissioner; and
- Add a provision to allow districts that rehire retired teachers to employ them on an “at-will” basis.

**House Bill 1587 Summary (Filed by House Education Committee Chair, Rep. Rob Eissler):**

This bill directs the Commissioner of Education to adopt a recommended performance evaluation system for teachers to evaluate teacher effectiveness that (a) “significantly” reflects the extent to which a teacher meets “student learning objectives and outcomes,” (b) is conducted annually by a certified evaluator, (c) is based on at least three classroom observations, (d) includes student performance on state assessments, (e) includes a self-evaluation by the teacher, (f) culminates in one of five ratings of overall performance, and a conference between the teacher and evaluator, and (g) creates a state certification for teacher evaluators and requirement for annual renewal of certification.

**Recommendations for House Bill 1587:**

- Include a definition of teacher effectiveness which prioritizes increasing student achievement, closing achievement gaps

between student groups, and preparing all students for postsecondary success;

- Increase specificity of the general description of the recommended performance evaluation system to address both individual and aggregate student outcomes, such as [proposed language] Section 21.351 (a) the commissioner shall adopt a recommended performance evaluation system for teachers to evaluate effectiveness. The system adopted must provide for basing at least 50 percent of the evaluation on the teacher’s student learning objectives and outcomes which must include student performance on assessment instruments administered under Section 39.023 and related to academic growth that is determined by value added measures or based on pre- and post-testing;
- Expand the provision requiring the commissioner to consider the advice of teachers in developing the performance evaluation system by additionally requiring the commissioner to consider the empirical research on teacher performance and effectiveness;
- Specify that the required minimum five ratings of a teacher’s overall performance must include ratings which identify teachers whose performance is (a) ineffective, (b) requires improvement, and (c) highly effective;
- Eliminate the provision that disallows results of reading instruments to be considered in evaluating teachers [Education Code Section 28.006 (e)]; and
- Expand criteria for the recommended performance evaluation system to include a requirement that annual evaluation must identify specific and measurable performance objectives for teachers to improve student achievement and

principals must provide teachers with opportunities to reach these objectives through continuing education (professional development), mentoring or professional collaboration.

**Senate Bill 3 Summary (Filed by Senate Education Committee Chair, Sen. Florence Shapiro):**

This bill retracts state authority limiting school district authority for employment management decisions which impede local efforts to improve teacher effectiveness by (a) lengthening time for districts to notify teachers about contract renewal, (b) repealing teacher minimum salary entitlement to salary earned in the 2010-2011 school year, (c) repealing 10:1 student: teacher ratio for remedial instruction, and (d) eliminating restrictions for student access to no more than two virtual courses per semester.

**Recommendation for Senate Bill 3:**

- Modify the provision eliminating the student teacher ratio for remedial courses to specify remedial courses without class size restrictions must be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated sustained effectiveness with academically disadvantaged students.

**Senate Bill 4 Summary (Filed by Senate Education Chair, Sen. Florence Shapiro):**

This bill creates a state policy for identifying, developing, and retaining effective teachers which (a) establishes an appraisal system that evaluates a teacher at least twice a year and bases at least 50 percent of the evaluation on teacher effectiveness (standardized achievement of the teacher's students, including student performance on state assessments, and annual improvement of student achievement) with the remainder based on objective criteria, (b) requires the principal to establish an annual individualized professional development plan for each teacher which includes continuing education

requirements and the principal must provide opportunities for the teacher to achieve the goals set forth in the plan, (c) requires the commissioner of education to adopt criteria for educator effectiveness and to create a certificate in teacher leadership for teachers who demonstrate effectiveness under these criteria, (d) requires the commissioner of education to adopt rules for minimum qualifications of individuals who conduct teacher appraisals, (e) creates a new, non-renewable provisional certificate for all beginning teachers which requires teachers to demonstrate effectiveness to earn a standard certificate within three years, (f) establishes career pathways to provide career opportunities within the profession, (g) requires the State Board for Educator Certification to create an evaluation and accountability system for continuing education courses, (h) requires the state examination for certification to teach early childhood through grade four include a science of reading component, and (i) requires applicants for early childhood through grade four certification to obtain at least 24 semester credit hours in any combination of the following English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and to complete no less than 15 hours in one single subject.

**Recommendations for Senate Bill 4:**

- Include a definition of teacher effectiveness which prioritizes increasing student achievement, closing achievement gaps between student groups, and preparing all students for postsecondary success;
- Specify the annual measurement of teacher effectiveness and annual improvement of the teacher's students is based on an independently validated and reliable measure of value added growth on standardized state assessments where applicable;
- Expand the provision requiring addition of a science of reading component to the

certification exam to specify that the reading component – as well as all other test areas – must be individually scored and reported – and that teaching candidates must pass the reading component to qualify for certification;

- Expand the provision requiring teaching candidates to obtain at least 24 semester credit hours in core academic subjects by requiring candidates to earn at least a 3.0 in each of the subject areas;
- Clarify all beginning teachers, including teachers certified through alternative preparation routes, must complete a three year provisional certification and demonstrate teaching effectiveness before the award of a standard certificate;
- Add the requirement for renewal of standard certification to be based on continued demonstration of teacher effectiveness in improving student achievement, based on value added measures of student performance on standardized assessments, state instruments wherever applicable;
- Require the commissioner to adopt rules for measuring teacher effectiveness that include objective measures that are aligned with evidence of empirical research;
- Add a provision to rules governing the recommended appraisal process that requires results of the appraisal to be considered in employment management decisions; and
- Expand the provision requiring the State Board for Educator Certification to monitor the quality of continuing education courses by specifying that continued approval must be based on empirical evidence that courses improve both student achievement and teacher practice.

**Senate Bill 443 Summary (Filed by Sen. Dan Patrick):**

This bill (a) loosens state class size limitations, allowing school districts to lower the student: teacher ratio for kindergarten through grade four from 22: 1 for each classroom to 21:1 on a district-wide average; and (b) tightens state educator conduct requirements by allowing immediate dismissal of teachers (or any employee) convicted of a felony.

**Recommendation for Senate Bill 443:**

- Expand the provision allowing use of a district-wide average for class size limitations by requiring teachers who have demonstrated sustained effectiveness in improving academic achievement of disadvantaged students to be assigned to kindergarten through grade 4 classes when class size exceeds 22 students.

**Senate Bill 468 (Filed by Senate Education Committee Chair, Sen. Florence Shapiro):**

Similar to Senate Bill 3, this bill retracts state authority limiting school district authority for employment management decisions which impede local efforts to improve teacher effectiveness by (a) lengthening time for districts to notify teachers about contract renewal, (b) repealing the 10:1 student: teacher ratio for remedial instruction, and (c) eliminating restriction for student access to no more than two virtual courses per semester.

**Recommendation for Senate Bill 468:**

- Expand the provision allowing use of a district-wide average for accelerated instruction class size limitations by requiring assignment of teachers who have demonstrated sustained effectiveness in improving academic achievement of disadvantaged students.

**Senate Bill 570 Summary (Filed by Senate Education Committee Chair, Sen. Florence Shapiro):**

This bill redesigns the state’s existing mentoring program (TXBESS), establishing a state infrastructure for district-level plans which can be tailored to local needs. It (a) establishes state standards for induction that are research-based and aligned with certification, appraisal, and accountability policies, (b) requires the commissioner of public education to adopt program guidelines for district plans, according to these standards, (c) provides state funding for district grants, (d) requires a majority of classroom teachers to approve district plans, (e) requires district plans to provide a support team for each beginning teacher (comprised of a district mentor, school administrator or assigned appraiser and a representative of the teacher’s educator preparation program) that meets with the teacher at least three times each school year and to provide individualized assistance for at least two years, (f) establishes standards for mentoring, including the need to demonstrate effectiveness in improving student achievement, (g) promotes collaboration between educator preparation programs and school districts, and (h) requires districts that do not participate in the state grant program to provide beginning teachers with induction and mentoring consistent with state standards.

**Recommendation for Senate Bill 570:**

- Include a definition of teacher effectiveness which prioritizes increasing student achievement, closing achievement gaps between student groups, and preparing all students for postsecondary success;
- Expand the requirements established for program components of induction and mentoring programs to include analysis of student performance data and relevance of data for improving instruction; and
- Expand program guidelines to specify at least 50 percent of an evaluation of teacher performance must be based improvement of student achievement—as determined by value added measures—according to state

assessments, where applicable, or district standardized assessments.

**III. REASONS TO SUPPORT THESE BILLS & TIER’S RECOMMENDATIONS**

**“Good teaching matters. There is persuasive evidence that students benefit from high quality instruction and that these benefits are cumulative for students who have good teachers for several years. Teacher effectiveness matters so much that low-income students lucky enough to have three very good teachers in a row in elementary school earn test scores that, on average, are similar to middle-class children. Conversely, almost all children, regardless of their socio-economic status, will be harmed academically by poor teaching three years running.”** National Academy of Education

*Teacher Quality, 2009*

**1. These bills and recommendations address some of the state teacher policy gaps identified by the National Council on Teacher Quality.**

The most recent evaluation of state policies affecting the teaching profession, conducted by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), awarded Texas an overall grade of C-.<sup>9</sup> In two of five policy areas – identifying effective teachers, and exiting ineffective teachers – Texas earned failing grades;<sup>10</sup> our state policies captured a B- for expanding the teaching pool – our highest grade – a C for delivering well prepared teachers and a C- for retaining effective teachers. NCTQ identified high priority areas that require immediate attention from Texas policymakers which are identified in the following text box.

**NCTQ: Policies Texas Urgently Needs to Improve Teacher Effectiveness**

1. Connect tenure to effectiveness
2. Make ineffectiveness ground for dismissal
3. Make science of reading & mathematics content part of elementary certification tests – report scores separately
4. Require all teachers to pass more rigorous subject matter tests before entering the classroom, particularly alternative route candidates & report scores

**Blueprint for Change, 2010 State Teacher Policy Yearbook**, National Council on Teaching Quality, 2010

**2. These bills and recommendations extend the reach of highly effective teachers to more students.**

According to a recent report by Public Impact,<sup>11</sup> “The top 25 percent of U.S. teachers – already more than 800,000 of them – already achieve a level of results that could enable all our children to meet and exceed standards.” Their research suggests that Texas policymakers can leverage the effectiveness of teachers and increase student achievement by: (1) identifying the most highly effective teachers, (2) rewarding and expanding professional opportunities for top teachers, (3) removing mandates that limit the number of students in classrooms of highly effective teachers, (4) assigning the most highly effective teachers to students with the greatest academic needs, (5) using highly effective teachers to mentor, coach, and appraise their peers, (6) providing professional development that is designed to improve teacher practice and effectiveness, (7) using technology to enable effective teachers to reach students at

distance, and (8) dismissing and replacing the least effective teachers with strong teachers.<sup>12</sup>

**“Good teachers do not generate the learning progress needed for lagging students. Only great teachers get the job done.”** Bryan Hassel & Emily Ayscue Hassel

*Opportunity at the Top: How America’s Best Teachers Could Close the Gaps, Raise the Bar, and Keep Our Nation Great*, Public Impact, 2010

**3. These bills and recommendations address critical deficiencies in the reading achievement of students in Texas public schools today.**

**“Reading proficiently by the end of third grade (as measured by NAEP at the beginning of the fourth grade) can be a make-or-break benchmark in a child’s educational development...The National Research Council asserts that ‘academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone’s reading skill at the end of third grade.’”**

Leila Fiester with Ralph Smith

*Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, Kids Count, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011

According to the latest report on reading by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), less than one-third of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in Texas public schools scored at or above the standard of Proficient.<sup>13</sup> Despite intense state efforts to improve reading proficiency, the

percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> graders meeting NAEP's standard of proficient has not significantly budged since 1992; nor do 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading NAEP scores show that Texas has made any progress in shrinking the reading achievement gap between student groups (approximately 21 point difference in scores between white students and their Black and Hispanic peers<sup>14</sup> – a difference which Education Trust calculates as representative of two grade levels<sup>15</sup>).

**4. These bills and recommendations address critical deficiencies in state policies governing teacher evaluation today.**

Despite new regulations, the State Professional Development & Appraisal System remains based on the 1997 Learner-Centered proficiencies<sup>16</sup> – contrary to research showing their weaknesses<sup>17</sup> – and performance standards are only indirectly related to student achievement by campus ratings; appraisals do not connect teachers with their students' achievement.<sup>18</sup>

**5. These bills and recommendations promise to reduce gaps in student achievement evident in Texas public schools today.**

<b>TEXAS 2009 NAEP GRADE 8 GAPS</b>	
•	Average reading score of Black students was 19 points lower than White students—no significant change from 1992
•	Average reading score of Hispanic students was 22 points lower than White students—no change from gap in 1992
•	Average math score of Black students was 28 points lower than White students—a gap that was reduced from 1990 (38 points)
•	Average math score of Hispanic students was 24 points lower than White students—gap was not significantly different from 1990

**GAPS IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT EVIDENT IN TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS TODAY**

<b>TEXAS NAEP READING &amp; MATH</b>			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Texas</u>	<u>Nation</u>	<u>Texas Proficient +</u>
<b>GRADE 4 AVERAGE READING SCORES</b>			
2009	219	220	28%
2005	219	219	29%
<b>GRADE 8 AVERAGE READING SCORES</b>			
2009	260	262	27%
2005	258	262	26%
<b>GRADE 4 AVERAGE MATH SCORES</b>			
2009	240	239	39%
2005	242	238	38%
<b>GRADE 8 AVERAGE MATH SCORES</b>			
2009	287	282	36%
2005	281	279	31%

<b>TEXAS MEAN SAT SCORES</b>			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Texas</u>	<u>Nation</u>	<u>Highest State</u>
2010	1462	1509	1798 (IA)
2009	1467	1509	1813 (IA)
2008	1473	1511	1797 (IA)
2007	1481	1511	1807 (IA)
2006	1484	1518	1806 (IA)

**GAPS IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT CONTINUED**

**2010 PISA Results**

- International test of 15 year old students administered by 56 nations
- U.S. students ranked –
  - 12<sup>th</sup> in reading
  - 17<sup>th</sup> in science
  - 25<sup>th</sup> in mathematics
- 9.9% U.S. students scored in two highest categories in math, compared to average of 12.7% scored by 34 nations in OECD

**PISA RESULTS COMPARED TO NAEP**

- The state with the nation’s highest % of students scoring at the advanced level in math (Massachusetts—11%) had a smaller % at the advanced level than 14 nations
- Texas , with 6.2% of students scoring at the advanced level, was significantly outperformed by 29 nations

**STUDENTS MEETING ACT’S COLLEGE READINESS BENCHMARKS**

Meeting Benchmarks in 4 Subjects

<u>Year</u>	<u>Texas</u>	<u>Nation</u>	<u>Highest State</u>
2010	24%	24%	41% (MA)
2009	22%	23%	39% (MA)
2008	20%	22%	36% (MA & NY)
2007	19%	23%	36% (MA)
2006	18%	21%	32% (CT & WA)

See Appendix for sources of achievement data.

**WHAT DO THE NUMBERS MEAN?**

1. With small exception, Texas performance on NAEP has not significantly improved over the past five years. Average scores generally hover about national average, with about 28% proficient in reading and about 35% proficient in math.
2. With small exception, Texas NAEP scores show no significant narrowing of achievement gaps between student groups. If 10 points in NAEP scores roughly correspond to one grade, as proposed by Education Trust, Texas Black and Hispanic students remain 2-2.5 grade levels below White classmates.
3. Like the nation, Texas’ average SAT scores declined from 2006 to 2010. However, Texas’ decline is far greater than the nation’s; consequently, the gap between state and national average grows each year. Today there is 47 point gap between the state and national average and 336 point difference between Texas and the state with the nation’s highest SAT (IA).
4. Between 2006 and 2010, Texas average SAT scores declined for Black students (10

**TEXAS SAT MEAN SCORE GAPS**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Mexican</u>	<u>White</u>
2010	1266	1341	1382	1590
2009	1266	1343	1374	1594
2008	1269	1349	1373	1588
2007	1279	1362	1392	1584
2006	1276	1328	1385	1591

points), Mexican/Mexican American students (3 points), and white students (1 point). Scores increased 13 points for Hispanic/Latino students, but in 2010, Hispanic/Latino students' average score was 249 points lower than the average score posted by White classmates.

5. Percentage of Texas students meeting benchmarks for college readiness on ACT increased steadily for the past 5 years, and closed the gap between state and national average. However, only 24% of Texas graduates are college ready and there is a vast achievement gap between Texas and the state with the highest percentage of college ready graduates (MA).
6. Recent PISA results show significant underperformance of U.S. high school students, particularly at advanced levels, and alarming achievement gap between U.S. and world's leading industrialized nations—Large for high performing states, such as Massachusetts, and enormous for lower performing states, such as Texas.
7. State, national, and international educational achievement gaps, particularly for students at lower and higher levels of performance, threaten economic and social well-being of all Texans.

#### IV. IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS: WHAT RESEARCH SAYS

**“A broad consensus, based on a large body of clear compelling evidence, recognizes that teacher quality is the most important school factor in student achievement.”**

Texas AFT

*Teaching Quality: Texas AFT Policy*, November 2007

The connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement is well substantiated by research that can be traced back to the

Coleman Report – undertaken in 1965 to investigate disparities in student achievement and educational opportunity. The Coleman report identified two key findings about student achievement; first, schools exert far less impact on student achievement than is exerted by students' background (including race, ethnicity, and family income), and, second, the demographics of a school's student body exert far more impact on student achievement than teacher characteristics or school resources.<sup>19</sup>

Over the past 50 years, a huge body of research has confirmed student background as a consistent predictor of academic achievement which generally outweighs the impact of teachers and schools.<sup>20</sup> *But this research concomitantly demonstrates the connection between student background and achievement can be broken by effective teachers.*

**“...school effectiveness research has had too narrow a focus...[t]hat is, it has concentrated on what is rather than on what could be.”** Peter Hill

*“Shaking the Foundations: Research Driven School Reform,” School Effectiveness and School Improvement, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1998*

There are literally hundreds of empirical research studies that show the effectiveness of teachers varies considerably within schools – even more so than teacher effectiveness varies between schools (most frequently cited studies include: Hill and Rowe 1996;<sup>21</sup> Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin 1998;<sup>22</sup> Aaronson, Barrow & Sanders 2003;<sup>23</sup> Rockoff 2003;<sup>24</sup> Schacter & Thum 2004;<sup>25</sup> Konstantopoulos 2006;<sup>26</sup> Hill 2008;<sup>27</sup> Buddin & Zamarro 2009;<sup>28</sup> and Buddin 2010<sup>29</sup>).

However, there is little consensus about the magnitude of a teacher's impact on student achievement (relative to student background and other school factors). Researchers estimate

teachers determine between 20 to 40 percent of student achievement (most frequently cited studies include: Scheerens & Bosker 1997;<sup>30</sup> Marzano 2000;<sup>31</sup> and Sanders 2004<sup>32</sup>).

Consequently the disproportionately high gains achieved by students with effective teachers are astounding. A large body of research shows that a large magnitude of academic gain is conferred to students fortunate enough to be assigned to effective teachers (most frequently cited studies include: Sanders & Rivers 1996;<sup>33</sup> Jordan, Mendro & Weerasinghe 1997;<sup>34</sup> Rowan, Correnti and Miller 2002;<sup>35</sup> Hanushek & Rivkin 2003;<sup>36</sup> Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges 2004;<sup>37</sup> and Aaronson, Barrow & Sanders 2007<sup>38</sup>).

There is, however, small consensus among researchers about the size of academic gains conferred by effective teachers and how gains should be measured. One empirical study finds that effective teachers produce student gains about four times greater than the least effective teachers (Sanders & Rivers 1996).<sup>39</sup> Another shows that students with the most effective teachers gain a full grade-level of learning above and beyond expected annual gains, while students with the least effective teacher lose the equivalent of half a grade-level (Hanushek & Rivkin 2003).<sup>40</sup> These findings are supported by the similar results of other researchers (most frequently cited: Aaronson, Barrow & Sanders 2007,<sup>41</sup> and Jordan, Mendro & Weerasinghe 1997<sup>42</sup>).

**““When compared to virtually every other school reform to date (e.g. class size reduction, charter schools, vouchers, direct instruction, technology, etc.), students who have effective teachers achieve the most.”** John Schacter & Yeow Meng Thum

*“Paying for high- and low-quality teaching,”  
Economics of Education Review, Vol. 23, 2004  
(p.411)*

Many empirical studies also find that teachers exert a stronger impact on student achievement than any other in-school factor (most frequently cited: Ferguson 1991;<sup>43</sup> Wright, Horn and Sanders 1997<sup>44</sup>; Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin 1998;<sup>45</sup> Marzano 2000;<sup>46</sup> and Nye Konstantopoulos & Hedges 2004<sup>47</sup>).

One study, for example, finds that increasing teacher effectiveness by one standard deviation has the same effect as lowering class size by 10-13 students (Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain 2005).<sup>48</sup>

**“...estimates of teacher performance suggest that having five years of good teachers in a row (one standard deviation above average, or at least the 85<sup>th</sup> quality percentile) could overcome the average 7<sup>th</sup> grade mathematic achievement gap between lower income kids (those on free or reduced price lunch) and those from higher income families. We do not tend to observe these family background deficits disappearing, however, because the current school system does not ensure any streaks of such high quality teachers – particularly for disadvantaged kids.”**Eric A. Hanushek & Steven G. Rivkin

*“How to Improve the Supply of High Quality Teachers,” Brookings Papers on Education Policy, May 2003*

Highly worth noting is that several empirical studies show that students with highly effective teachers can significantly overcome educational disadvantages associated with socio-economic factors, and reduce or close the achievement gap between student groups (most frequently cited: Sanders and Rivers 1996;<sup>49</sup> Marzano 2003;<sup>50</sup> Hanushek and Rivkin 2003;<sup>51</sup> and Gordon, Kane & Staiger 2006<sup>52</sup>).

This research suggests that student achievement can be significantly improved by reforming state teacher policies to reflect the empirical findings about teacher effectiveness. Even more so, this research suggests that state teacher policies should clearly articulate that race, ethnicity, and family income need not and should not determine student achievement if teachers are highly effective.

**“Great teachers could close our nation’s stubborn achievement gaps in a mere half-decade and provide advanced learning opportunities to every child.”** Bryan Hassel & Emily Ayscue Hassel

*Opportunity at the Top: How America’s Best Teachers Could Close the Gaps, Raise the Bar, and Keep Our Nation Great*, Public Impact, 2010

## V. DEFINING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

Although there is strong consensus that effective teachers are necessary to improve student achievement, there is much division about ways to define teacher effectiveness among researchers, the education community, and policymakers.

There are two broad and distinct usages of the term “teacher effectiveness.” Some consider teacher effectiveness as the demonstrated ability to improve student achievement – as measured by gains on standardized assessments and other academic outcomes such high school graduation.<sup>53</sup>

Others believe the definition of teacher effectiveness should encompass expectations of the social development as well as academic achievement of students, plus include a broad range of performances by the teacher.

### **Blueprint for Reform: Great Teachers & Great Leaders, Reauthorization of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act**

**“To measure, develop, and improve the effectiveness of their teachers, leaders and preparation programs, states and districts will be required to put in place a few specific policies and systems, including:**

- **Statewide definitions of effective teacher...that are based in significant part on student growth and also include other measures, such as classroom observations of practice.”**

**U.S. Department of Education, 2010**

The Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality advocates a five-point definition of teacher effectiveness which includes (1) holding high expectations for students, (2) contributing to the student’s academic, attitudinal and social outcomes, (3) using diverse resources to plan and evaluate learning, (4) developing classroom and schools that value diversity and civic-mindedness, and (5) collaborating with other teachers, administrators, parents, and education professionals.<sup>54</sup> This definition, it should be noted, does not include expectations for teachers to improve the academic achievement of their students.

For Texans, logic would seem to dictate that state policy should explicitly define teacher effectiveness; a definition is fundamental to the success of state efforts to identify, measure, and improve teacher effectiveness. Rather than creating an ideological definition and choosing between the two definitions described above, it would seem reasonable for Texans to adopt a definition of teacher effectiveness that reflects established state goals for public education, and identifies objectively measurable criteria for teacher effectiveness.

Incorporating expectations for student achievement established by the Texas Education Code Section 28.001 and House Bill 3 (81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature, 2009) should translate into expectations for teachers to demonstrate growth in their students' achievement, as measured by academic growth on state assessments, and progress towards high school graduation equipped to succeed in postsecondary endeavors. Last but not least, the state definition of teacher effectiveness should incorporate the expectation that effective teaching shrinks the achievement gaps between student groups. This expectation derives from Texas Education Code Section 28.001 which specifies that public schools are to prepare *all* students for postsecondary success.

**“Working definitions of teacher effectiveness are often elusive or so politically charged that they are unusable. However, the urgent need for highly effective teachers in every classroom calls for a clear definition of effectiveness and action toward creating the conditions for it.”** Laura Varlas

“Highly Effective Teachers: Defining, Rewarding, Supporting, and Expanding their Roles,” *ASCD Info Brief*, Vo.15 (3), 2009

Although the proposed definition of teacher effectiveness is based on state statute, can be objectively measured, and advances one of the highest state and individual priorities of Texans today, its limitations should be acknowledged – and valued – because this definition identifies the most important expectation for teachers in Texas public schools today.

Teacher effectiveness does not currently relate to state policies governing the profession of teaching in Texas public schools today – such as teacher evaluations, professional development, continuing education, teacher preparation, and

mentoring/induction. Instead, existing state policies are largely connected to teaching qualifications that have been used to identify “highly qualified teachers” – such as degree courses taken, preparation program, and state certification – and their contribution is soundly debated.

**“However, it is increasingly clear that ‘highly qualified’ – having the necessary qualifications and certifications – does not necessarily predict ‘highly effective’ teaching – teaching that improves student learning.”** Olivia Little, Laura Goe & Courtney Bell

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2009

Several decades of research offer mixed findings about the impact of teacher qualifications on student achievement. Research, some empirical, published by the educational community – such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards,<sup>55</sup> the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality,<sup>56</sup> The Association of Texas Professional Educators,<sup>57</sup> and the Texas AFT<sup>58</sup> – identifies significant relationships between teacher qualifications and student achievement.

In contrast, empirical studies produced by researchers independent of the education profession find modest or no relationship between teacher qualifications and student achievement gains. When found, these gains are so modest that the preponderance of researchers suggest teacher qualifications should not serve as a predictor of future effectiveness.<sup>59</sup> Instead, most researchers suggest the first two years of classroom performance provides the most reliable predictor.<sup>60</sup> In other words, the best predictor of teacher effectiveness is a teacher’s work in the classroom.

**“First, teacher education, credentials, experience, and subject authorization can make a difference in student outcomes on tests, but the effects are neither as systematic nor as large as some may believe. Julian Betts, Andrew Zau & Lorein Rice**

*Determinants of Student Achievement: New Evidence from San Diego*, Public Policy Institute of California, 2003

**“Public school districts in this country will not and cannot ultimately fulfill their promise to American Society—and the ever-increasing expectations placed on them by their communities—without any adequate and reliable supply of well-prepared and effective classroom teachers....leaders... must step up to this challenge if we are to achieve the nation’s ambitious education goals.” Sid W Richardson Foundation**

*Delivering a High-Quality Teacher Workforce for Texas: Reconsidering University-Based Teacher Preparation in Texas, Renewing Commitments, and Improving Practice in the Twenty-First Century*, Sid W. Richardson Foundation, 2009

## VI. STATE TEACHER POLICY REFORM: THE BROAD CONTEXT

Efforts to improve teacher quality have been a policy priority for Texas over the past decade, and a cornerstone of No Child Left Behind. There is a growing awareness that improving the effectiveness of teachers requires, what the National Academy of Education calls, “a constellation of mutually reinforcing policies, which should include data systems, teacher recruitment, teacher preparation, certification, strategic compensation, induction, mentoring and professional development, performance appraisal, and professional pathways or opportunities to advance within the field of teaching.”<sup>61</sup>

At the same time, there is an expanding body of empirical research and technical expertise in identifying, measuring, and improving teacher effectiveness which can contribute to this effort.

For this reason, the Texas Legislature should strongly consider creating a public commission on Teaching, similar to that established by Colorado (a state that is now leading the nation in teacher policy reform), to recommend a comprehensive, systemic, and coherent state policy agenda for improving teacher effectiveness (the first recommendation proposed by TIER’s recent report entitled *A Teacher Compensation Strategy for Excellence in the Texas Classroom* which is a companion to this policy brief and available at [http://www.naeducation.org/Teacher\\_Quality\\_White\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.naeducation.org/Teacher_Quality_White_Paper.pdf). A framework for comprehensive, systemic, and coherent state policy reforms to improve teacher effectiveness is offered in the Appendix of this policy brief.

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature has the exceedingly critical opportunity to improve teacher effectiveness. Enacted, the bills and suggestions described in this policy brief should significantly improve teaching and learning in Texas public schools.

## ABOUT TEXAS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION REFORM

TIER is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, non-partisan organization of community and business leaders throughout the state who organized to raise public awareness and educate Texas opinion leadership on the current status of public education in Texas, the progress of our standards and accountability-based reforms to date, the prognosis for achieving the essential universal educational proficiency of the children of Texas, and the daunting challenges that we must face in doing so.

Through its leaders and advisors, TIER has access to the nation's leading education policy expertise, the best minds in the country, and will use these resources to bring to bear on the Texas reform effort the best available research-based strategies, benchmarked practices, and policy innovations.

The objective of TIER is that every child will graduate from high school fully prepared for higher education and the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace as well as responsible citizenship.

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of numerous publications examining school finance, teacher compensation, curriculum, assessment, accountability, textbooks, and school choice that were published by a variety of state policy organizations since 1996.

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## APPENDIX

### DATA SOURCES FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

#### Texas NAEP Reading & Math

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## **A STATE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR IMPROVING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS**

- I. **Introduce multifaceted, Integrated, Systemic Educator Reforms in the Following Areas:**
  - A. **Preparation (including education, training, certification, alternative routes & program accountability)**
  - B. **Induction & Mentoring**
  - C. **Career paths**

- D. Tenure
- E. Performance Appraisals & Standards for Educator Effectiveness
- F. Professional Development
- G. District Compensation Plans & Financial Incentives
- H. District Authority & Performance Management
- I. Working Conditions

**II. Enhance State Education Policy Infrastructure to Support Teaching & Learning in the Following Areas:**

- A. State Public & Higher Education Data Systems (including Value Added Measures)
- B. Reading Instruction & Assessments to Achieve Reading on Grade Level
- C. Grade Level & End of Course Assessments
- D. Student Assignment & Class Size
- E. School & District Accountability
- F. State and Local Governance

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**A. TEACHER PREPARATION:**

1. Standardize state requirements for all educator preparation programs (university and alternative): (1) require candidates in alternative programs to pass an academic measure (such as prior GPA), and tests that measure rigorous content knowledge and, for elementary teachers, the science of reading, and (2) require university programs to ensure the general education and education program requirements for elementary teachers include a broad liberal arts preparation.
2. Revise educator preparation programs and certification tests to support the state goal of postsecondary readiness.
3. Establish specific and separate minimum academic achievement baselines in English Language Arts,

Mathematics, and Science for entry into teacher preparation programs.

4. Require education preparation programs to adopt exit assessments in specific content areas that are relevant for the teaching candidate.
5. Revise state educator standards (eliminating learning centered standards).
6. Revise state certification tests to introduce a rigorous examination of content.
7. Include an assessment of training in (1) the science of reading and (2) conceptual knowledge of mathematics in state certification tests for elementary teachers, and establish, as well as report, a sub-score for both reading and mathematics.
8. Revise state certification tests to require prospective elementary teachers (1) pass rigorous content tests, (2) demonstrate knowledge of empirically proven effective instructional methods and programs, and report test scores in each subject area.
9. Revise state certification requirements for elementary special education teachers to assess the same subject area tests as other elementary teachers.
10. Require candidates for emergency permits to pass a rigorous subject area test.
11. Require prospective teachers to complete a student-teaching assignment for at least one school year.
12. Award state certification after 3 years of teaching, based on principal evaluations of teacher effectiveness.

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13. Hold preparation programs accountable for teacher effectiveness.
  14. Create master teacher certifications for (1) elementary school core content areas, and (2) middle and high school reading.
  15. Revise principal and superintendent certification to focus on management and leadership skills (including performance data analysis, budgeting and finance, and human resource management).
- B. Induction & Mentoring**
1. Require all teachers new to the profession to complete a three year apprenticeship in schools under the intensive direction of a highly effective mentor or master teacher before applying for a Standard Certificate.
- C. Career Pathways**
1. Require schools to establish pathways that identify graduating, increasing levels of effectiveness and responsibility (such as beginning teacher, effective teacher, master teacher, and campus curriculum leader).
  2. Link these pathways to annual appraisals, professional development, compensation, and employment decisions.
- D. Tenure**
1. Withhold tenure until educators demonstrate three consecutive years of effectiveness, based on value added measures of student achievement.
  2. Withdraw tenure without appeal when educators fail to demonstrate effectiveness for two out of three consecutive years.
- E. Performance Appraisals & Standards for Educator Effectiveness**
1. Revise state appraisal system to hold teachers, principals, and administrators primarily accountable for growth in student achievement and closing student achievement gaps, using value added measures that apply to at least 50 percent of the appraisal rating.
  2. Revise principal and superintendent appraisals to include accountability for teacher effectiveness.
  3. Require districts to use state appraisal system or system that prioritizes student achievement in same manner as state system.
  4. Require annual teacher, principal, and superintendent appraisals.
  5. Link performance appraisals with annual professional development goals, career opportunities, and continuation of employment.
- F. Professional Development**
1. Establish state standards for districts to use in providing professional development that are based on findings of empirical research
  2. Require districts to connect professional development to annual appraisals, compensation, and personnel management
- G. District Compensation Plans & Financial Incentives**
1. Require districts to create a local compensation plan for educators that are based on state guidelines for strategic pay.
  2. Create a foundation allotment to underwrite costs of local strategic pay plans.
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#### **H. District Authority and Performance Management**

- 1. Rewrite statute and regulation to allow districts/principals to make all human resource decisions.**
- 2. If full authority is not granted:**
  - (a) Enable districts to require aggressive professional development and remediation programs of ineffective teachers, and terminate/reassign those who do not improve after a reasonable time.**
  - (b) Enable districts to lay off teachers throughout the district on the basis of effectiveness rather than seniority.**
  - (c) Provide statutory permission for districts to dismiss teachers for the reason of ineffectiveness.**
  - (d) Limits opportunity to appeal non-probationary teachers who are dismissed for any grounds to one time at the district level and involves only experienced adjudicators.**

### **III. STATE EDUCATION POLICY INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### **A. Integrate the two existing systems for K-12 and postsecondary.**

- 1. Add value added growth measures for student performance.**
- 2. Link individual student performance with individual educators.**
- 3. Create on-time graduation/dropout prevention data for individual students based on course completion.**
- 4. Track individual student growth toward postsecondary readiness.**
- 5. Provide free, real time, immediately accessible individual student and educator information to school districts.**

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#### **B. Reading Instruction & Assessments to Achieve Reading on Grade Level**

- 1. Administer valid and reliable annual assessments to determine if students are reading on grade level, aligning grade level reading standards with textbook reading difficulty.**
- 2. Require districts to provide accelerated reading instruction to all students who are not reading at grade level (in-district programs for no more than one year and after one year of in-district instruction, annual stipends for enrollment in TEA-approved private reading instruction programs).**

#### **C. Grade Level & End of Course Assessments**

- 1. Administer computer administered, commercially produced grade level interactive assessments which identify annual value added annual gains for grade 1-5.**
- 2. Administer commercially produced end-of-course assessments for core content areas for grades 6-12, with pre-and post-testing, which identify value added annual gains.**

#### **D. Student Assignment & Class Size**

- 1. Allow districts to set class size limits within state guidelines.**
- 2. Require districts to limit class size for (1) teachers who do not demonstrate top quartile effectiveness based on value added performance measures, and (2) teachers who do not demonstrate top quartile effectiveness and are assigned students who demonstrate significant gaps in performance.**
- 3. Require districts to establish policies to assign underperforming**

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- students to the most highly effective teachers for the subject within the student's school.
4. Require districts to establish policies to improve the number of highly effective teachers and quality of teacher effectiveness at schools with the highest populations of low income and/or under performance, based on value added measures.

**E. Working Conditions**

1. Require districts to establish teacher advisory groups charged to provide recommendations for reform to district trustees.

**F. School & District Accountability**

1. Require schools & districts to meet annual standards for increasing the percentage of students (1) students achieving postsecondary readiness, and (2) closing achievement gaps to earn Acceptable ratings.
2. Introduce a school and district standard for teacher effectiveness and distribution of teacher effectiveness to earn the Acceptable rating.

**G. State & Local Governance**

1. Replace SBEC with a legislative appointed State Commission for Educator Effectiveness.
2. Eliminate all statutory and regulatory requirements related to district management of human resources.
3. Require districts to establish community advisory councils to review and recommend district policy (with education professionals serving as the minority percentage of membership).

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4. Require districts to create partnerships with local institutions of higher education for the purpose of evaluating and improving student achievement.